

Improve your game with some interesting and instructive hands from Sligo 2022

<p>♠ K6 ♥ AJ7 ♦ Q75 ♣ KQ864</p> <p>♠ J1082 ♠ 973 ♥ 83 ♥ KQ1094 ♦ A10864 ♦ 92 ♣ 92 ♣ A53</p> <p>♠ AQ54 ♥ 652 ♦ KJ3 ♣ J107</p>		<p>Sligo - Mon 23rd 2022</p> <p>Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable</p> <table><tr><td>West</td><td>North</td><td>East</td><td>South</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>1♣</td><td>1♥</td><td>DbI</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>1NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>3NT</td></tr></table> <p>All Pass</p>		West	North	East	South		1♣	1♥	DbI	Pass	1NT	Pass	3NT																														
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<table><tr><th>HCP</th><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>♣</td><td>♦</td><td>♥</td><td>♠</td><td>N T</td></tr><tr><td>15</td><td>N</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>5 9</td><td>S</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>11</td><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr></table>		HCP	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	N T	15	N	3	2	1	2	1	5 9	S	3	2	1	2	1	11	E	-	-	-	-	-		W	-	-	-	-	-	<p>South's double is a 'negative' or 'sputnik' double showing 4 cards in spades (a 1♠ bid would show a 5 card spade suit).</p> <p>East leads the ♥K and declarer ducks – this duck is called a 'Bath Coup' because if East continues with a second round of hearts declarer will win two heart tricks instead of the one trick that he is entitled to.</p> <p>East must look at West's card carefully and he should only play a second round of hearts if West encourages at trick 1. Of course West should not encourage at trick 1 - West should only encourage if he has the ♥A or the ♥J and since West has neither card he should discourage.</p> <p>Now if East switches to a spade then declarer will go down in his contract in the fullness of time. West gets in at some point with his ♦A and shoots a heart through declarer's ♥AJ.</p>	
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<p>♠ 1098 ♥ 109753 ♦ A72 ♣ A2</p> <p>♠ 43 ♠ AKQ7 ♥ K62 ♥ AQ4 ♦ 64 ♦ QJ3 ♣ KQJ1084 ♣ 953</p> <p>♠ J652 ♥ J8 ♦ K10985 ♣ 76</p>	<p>Sligo - Mon 23rd May 2022 Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all</p> <table><tr><td>West</td><td>North</td><td>East</td><td>South</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>1♠</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>2♣</td><td>Pass</td><td>2NT</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>3NT</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p>South leads his longest suit against 3NT and ideally he should lead ♦10 (top of an internal sequence).</p> <p>North wins with the ♦A and returns the ♦7 to say he has either ♦A72 or ♦A7.</p> <p>As declarer we all know to duck when we have no entry to our long suit – well it is the very same in defence. If we have a hand such as South's where we have no outside entry to our long diamonds, we duck at trick 2. Now when North gets in with ♣A he will return his 3rd diamond and now South can win 4 diamond tricks.</p> <p>(If North returns the ♦2 he is saying he either has ♦A2 or ♦AQ72 and now South will win trick 2 and declarer will make his contract...because North won't have a diamond left to return to South.)</p>	West	North	East	South			1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass		
West	North	East	South														
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HCP	
8	
9	18
5	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	4	1	2	3	2
W	4	1	2	3	2

<p>♠ K732 ♥ 864 ♦ AKJ6 ♣ 85</p> <p>♠ 10984 ♠ QJ65 ♥ J5 ♥ 10972 ♦ 84 ♦ Q53 ♣ KJ963 ♣ A2</p> <p>♠ A ♥ AKQ3 ♦ 10972 ♣ Q1074</p>		<p>Sligo - Mon 23rd May 2022</p> <p>Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1♦</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>1♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>1NT</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>3NT</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td></tr></table> <p>West leads ♣6, East wins with the ace and returns the 2. The ♣2 return shows either ♣ A2 so West should know that if he plays a 3rd round of clubs he will be setting up a club trick for declarer and with no prospect of getting back in himself to cash his own fifth club.</p> <p>So West does better to switch to ♠10 at trick 3 and now E/W will come to 5 tricks before declarer comes to 9 tricks.</p>				West	North	East	South				1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass	
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11	N	1	4	2	-	2
5	S	1	4	2	-	2
	E	-	-	-	-	-
15	W	-	-	-	-	-

<p>♠ Q10862 ♥ 865 ♦ AK98 ♣ 3</p> <p>♠ AK3 ♠ 94 ♥ QJ2 ♥ AK94 ♦ Q7632 ♦ 10 ♣ J10 ♣ AQ9762</p> <p>♠ J75 ♥ 1073 ♦ J54 ♣ K854</p>		<p>Sligo - Mon 16th May 2022</p> <p>Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th><i>West</i></th><th><i>North</i></th><th><i>East</i></th><th><i>South</i></th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>1 ♣</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>1 ♦</td><td>Pass</td><td>1 ♥</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>3NT</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p>North leads ♠6. Declarer wins and runs the ♣J at trick 2. A good South will refuse this trick and win the second round of clubs.</p> <p>The advantage of this holdup is that it gives North a chance to discard ♠2 to say that his spades are not great.</p> <p>An now it is easy for South to find a diamond switch and for full effect South should switch to the ♦J and now it's 3NT-1.</p>				<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>			1 ♣	Pass	1 ♦	Pass	1 ♥	Pass	3NT	All Pass																										
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<p>♠ 942 ♥ A965 ♦ J74 ♣ AQ9</p> <p>♠ Q10863 ♠ 75 ♥ 87 ♥ KQJ104 ♦ 963 ♦ A2 ♣ J87 ♣ 10642</p> <p>♠ AKJ ♥ 32 ♦ KQ1085 ♣ K53</p>		<p>Sligo - Mon 16th May 2022</p> <p>Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all</p> <table><tr><th><i>West</i></th><th><i>North</i></th><th><i>East</i></th><th><i>South</i></th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1♦</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>1♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>1NT</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>3NT</td><td>Dbf</td><td>All Pass</td></tr></table> <p>3NT is the normal contract for N/S and if East does not bid, he will lead ♠6 and now declarer has time to knockout the ♦A and make 11 tricks.</p> <p>If East gets a chance to bid he will bid his hearts and now West will lead a heart and defeat the contract.</p> <p>If East does not get a chance to bid his hearts he can ask West to lead a heart by ‘doubling’ the final 3NT contract. This is a conventional double asking partner to lead the ‘first suit bid by dummy’ i.e. hearts in the above auction. 3NT-1.</p>				<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>				1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass	1NT	Pass	3NT	Dbf	All Pass																												
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<p>♠ J 10 7 4 2 ♥ 7 ♦ J 8 ♣ J 10 9 7 5</p> <p>♠ A Q 5 ♠ K 9 6 ♥ 10 9 6 2 ♥ 8 4 3 ♦ Q 10 6 3 ♦ A K ♣ A Q ♣ K 6 4 3 2</p> <p>♠ 8 3 ♥ A K Q J 5 ♦ 9 7 5 4 2 ♣ 8</p>		<p>Sligo - Mon 16th May 2022 Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable West North East South 1NT Pass 3NT Dbl All Pass</p> <p>3NT is the normal contract for E/W and if North does not hear from South in the auction, he will lead ♠4 and now declarer can win the first 10 tricks.</p> <p>If South gets a chance to bid he will bid his hearts and now North will lead a heart and defeat the contract.</p> <p>If South does not get a chance to bid his hearts he can ask North to lead a heart by ‘doubling’ the final 3NT contract. This is a conventional double asking partner to lead his ‘shortest major’ i.e. hearts in this case. 3NT-1.</p>																																													
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♠ KJ2	
♥ J64	
♦ AQJ73	
♣ 72	
♠ 974	♠ 8
♥ 72	♥ Q1095
♦ 10985	♦ K64
♣ KQJ4	♣ 109653
♠ AQ10653	
♥ AK83	
♦ 2	
♣ A8	

HCP	
12	
6	5
17	

Makeable contracts						
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
N	1	4	5	6	5	
S	1	4	5	6	5	
E	-	-	-	-	-	
W	-	-	-	-	-	

Sligo, Killarney Game - Fri 13th May 2022

Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			1 ♠
Pass	2 ♦	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	4 ♠	Pass	4NT
Pass	5 ♥	Pass	6 ♠ All Pass

As is often the case, any declarer who makes 12 tricks will score well whether they are in 4 ♠ or 6 ♠.

West leads the ♣K and declarer should see that he has 6 spade tricks, 2 heart tricks and 1 club trick and therefore needs 3 diamond tricks.

The best way to play this diamond layout is to take a ruffing finesse i.e. play a diamond to the ace and then run the ♦Q and discard a club if the ♦Q is not covered.

We take the ruffing diamond finesse before drawing trumps because we need trump entries later to get over to dummy to ruff out and establish those diamonds.

<p>♠ 104 ♥ 83 ♦ Q83 ♣ KJ8764 ♠ AJ985 ♠ KQ3 ♥ Q2 ♥ KJ104 ♦ K976 ♦ A1042 ♣ A2 ♣ Q9 ♠ 762 ♥ A9765 ♦ J5 ♣ 1053</p>		<p>Sligo, Killarney Game - Wed 13th May 2022</p> <p>Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all</p>																																					
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<p>♠ A3 ♥ A52 ♦ J1053 ♣ KJ64</p> <p>♠ Q1095 ♠ KJ74 ♥ KQ108 ♥ 9763 ♦ A7 ♦ 92 ♣ 852 ♣ 1093</p> <p>♠ 862 ♥ J4 ♦ KQ864 ♣ AQ7</p>		<p>Sligo, Killarney Game - Wed 13th May 2022</p> <p>Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th><i>West</i></th><th><i>North</i></th><th><i>East</i></th><th><i>South</i></th></tr><tr><td></td><td>1NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>3NT</td></tr></table> <p>All Pass</p> <p>If East leads a spade and West is allowed to win the first trick, then West should switch to the ♥K at trick 2 setting up 5 tricks for the defence i.e. 1 spade, 3 hearts and the ace of diamonds.</p> <p>Similarly if East leads a heart and West wins trick 1 and finds a spade switch he will defeat 3NT.</p> <p>To make this contract, declarer needs to win trick 1 i.e. do not hold up and immediately knock out the ♦A. Now declarer makes 9 tricks and loses only 4 tricks i.e. loses 3 spades and one diamond.</p> <p>Generally whenever we have two weak suits – we do not hold up. Holding up is something we do to protect ourselves against 5 card suits in the defenders hands but if declarer studies East's ♠4 opening lead carefully, he will know that East has only 4 cards in spades (the ♠2 is in dummy and the ♠3 is in his own hand). So the spades are not a threat – so we do not need to hold up at trick 1.</p>		<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>		1NT	Pass	3NT																																				
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♠ AK862 ♥ 74 ♦ Q103 ♣ 764	
♠ 93 ♥ AKQJ108 ♦ A754 ♣ A	♠ J105 ♥ 92 ♦ 862 ♣ KQJ109
♠ Q74 ♥ 653 ♦ KJ9 ♣ 8532	

HCP	
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18	7
6	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	5	2	5	-	2
W	5	2	5	-	2

Sligo, Killarney Game – Wed 11th May 2022

Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass

The West hand is perfect for an old fashioned ‘Strong Acol Two’ but nobody plays those these days. So we have to either open 1♥ or 2♣ (23+) or 2♣ if you are playing benji (showing a strong acol two somewhere).

In any case, it doesn’t matter on this board as all roads lead to 4♥ by West.

Declarer will make 11 tricks as long as he does not carelessly ruff the third round of spades with his ♥8 – he needs that ♥8 as an entry to dummy’s ♥9 so that he can cash a few clubs after first unblocking the ♣A from his hand.

<p>♠ Q 10 9 7 6 ♥ J 5 ♦ K Q 10 ♣ A K 2</p> <p>♠ 5 3 ♠ A K ♥ A 8 7 6 ♥ 10 9 3 2 ♦ 9 8 7 5 ♦ 6 4 2 ♣ 7 6 3 ♣ Q J 10 9</p> <p>♠ J 8 4 2 ♥ K Q 4 ♦ A J 3 ♣ 8 5 4</p>		<p>Sligo, Killarney Game – Wed 11th May 2022</p> <p>Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th><i>West</i></th><th><i>North</i></th><th><i>East</i></th><th><i>South</i></th></tr><tr><td></td><td>1 ♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>3 ♠</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>4 ♠</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td></tr></table> <p>All roads lead to 4 ♠ by North. East leads ♣ Q.</p> <p>If declarer immediately starts to draw trumps then the opponents will defeat the contract by continuing clubs. The defence will score 1 club, 1 heart and 2 trumps.</p> <p>To make the contract, declarer should immediately set up his 2 heart tricks before drawing trumps. Declarer's plan is to knock out the ♥ A and then discard his losing club from his hand before he lets his opponents in with their trump winners.</p>		<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>		1 ♠	Pass	3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠	All Pass																																					
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W	-	-	-	-	-																																														

♠ 543
 ♥ 65
 ♦ K95
 ♣ 109543
 ♠ A98 ♠ K62
 ♥ 32 ♥ AQJ1074
 ♦ J8432 ♦ A6
 ♣ Q72 ♣ AJ
 ♠ QJ107
 ♥ K98
 ♦ Q107
 ♣ K86

HCP		
	3	
7		19
	11	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	1	2	4	2	3
W	-	2	4	2	3

Sligo, Killarney Game – Wed 11th May 2022

Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1 ♥	Pass
1NT	Pass	4 ♥	All Pass

Most roads will lead to 4 ♥ but a few will languish in 3 ♥.

Once West shows 6 points then East should know that they have 25 points and when his hearts are as good as they are (suit quality test of 10) then he should just bid 4 ♥ rather than an invitational 3 ♥.

Of course, he might be happy that he only bid 3 ♥ if he only makes 3 ♥.

To make 4 ♥, declarer needs to establish two club tricks while keeping the ♠A as an entry to the second club trick.

So win the spade lead in hand with the King. Play ace of clubs and then lead the ♣J. South can take his ♣K but now declarer can get to dummy with his carefully preserved ♠A in order to cash the established ♣Q discarding his losing diamond (or spade) in the process.

<div><div>♠ J1098</div><div>♥ J872</div><div>♦ A754</div><div>♣ J</div></div> <div><div>♠ Q2</div><div>♥ 4</div><div>♦ QJ1098</div><div>♣ A7532</div></div> <div><div>♠ AK54</div><div>♥ AK653</div><div>♦ 3</div><div>♣ K64</div></div> <div><div>♠ 763</div><div>♥ Q109</div><div>♦ K62</div><div>♣ Q1098</div></div> <div><table><tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr><tr><td>7</td><td>9</td></tr><tr><td>17</td><td>7</td></tr></table><table><tr><th colspan="7">Makeable contracts</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td></td></tr></table></div>	HCP		7	9	17	7	Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT		N	-	-	-	-	-		S	-	-	-	-	-		E	4	4	2	3	3		W	4	4	2	3	3		<div>Sligo Fast-Friday Game – Friday 6th May 2022</div> <div>Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all</div> <div><table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>Pass</td><td>1♥</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>2♦</td><td>Pass</td><td>2♠</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>3NT</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table><p>This hand is about ‘entries’ to the diamonds in the West hand.</p><p>If North leads a spade then declarer needs to win trick one in dummy and keep the ♠Q as an entry to the West hand.</p><p>At trick 2 declarer goes after diamonds and knocks out the ♦K. Then when she is back in with the ♠Q she can knock out the ♦A and now she still has the ♣A as an entry to her three established diamond tricks.</p></div>	West	North	East	South		Pass	1♥	Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠	Pass	3NT	All Pass		
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<div><div>♠ AJ104</div><div>♥ 5</div><div>♦ AQ53</div><div>♣ AQ64</div></div> <div><div>♠ 832</div><div>♥ K10863</div><div>♦ 8762</div><div>♣ 10</div></div> <div><div>♠ Q76</div><div>♥ Q974</div><div>♦ K4</div><div>♣ 9873</div></div> <div><div>♠ K95</div><div>♥ AJ2</div><div>♦ J109</div><div>♣ KJ52</div></div>	<div>Sligo Fast-Friday Game – Friday 6th May 2022</div> <div>Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable</div> <div><table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>Pass</td><td>1NT</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>2♣</td><td>Pass</td><td>2♦</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>3NT</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td></tr></table><p>West leads ♥6 to East’s ♥Q and declarer’s ♥A.</p><p>Now East is the danger hand and we have to keep East off lead because if she returns a heart through declarer’s ♥J then declarer will lose 4 heart tricks.</p><p>So declarer spurns the diamond finesse and instead takes a spade finesse by leading ♠J from dummy and letting it run into the West hand if not covered. West is the safe opponent as he cannot get his hands on declarer’s ♥J.</p><p>As it turns out the spade finesse wins so declarer ends up with 10 tricks.</p></div>	West	North	East	South			Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass	3NT	All Pass																																																	
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♠ Q109832	
♥ 83	
♦ 104	
♣ QJ10	
♠ AK5	♠ 64
♥ AKQJ9	♥ 1072
♦ KQJ2	♦ A853
♣ 5	♣ A643
♠ J7	
♥ 654	
♦ 976	
♣ K9872	

HCP	
5	
23	8
4	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	3	7	7	2	6
W	3	7	7	2	6

Sligo Fast-Friday Game – Friday 6th May 2022

Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			Pass
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♥	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♥	All Pass

Some of you might bid the very reasonable 7♥ hoping that East has more than just his two aces but the fact remains that East has not promised more than his two aces – especially if 2♦ is merely a relay?

Still there might be a few who forget to ruff the third spade with the ♥10 and now 6♥+1 will score very well.

Never ‘send a boy on a man’s errand’ – declarer can afford to ruff the third round of spades ‘high’.

♠ Q972
 ♥ Q74
 ♦ 984
 ♣ Q64
 ♠ AJ65 ♠ K10
 ♥ K8 ♥ A65
 ♦ 10652 ♦ KQJ3
 ♣ J107 ♣ A983
 ♠ 843
 ♥ J10932
 ♦ A7
 ♣ K52

HCP
6
9 17
8

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	5	5	2	3	3
W	5	5	2	3	3

Sligo – Inter A – Tuesday 1st February 2022

Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♣	1♥
Dbl	Pass	1NT	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

E/W have 26 points and no 8-card major suit fit so they would like to land in 3NT.

South leads ♥J and declarer counts his tricks – 2 hearts, 1 club and 2 spades for 5 top tricks. He can establish 3 more in diamonds by ‘chasing the ace’ and he can get his ninth in spades by either correctly finessing or by conceding a trick to the queen.

Whenever we have to lose the lead twice, we start by attacking the suit where our long suit opponent might have his entry – so we play on diamonds first. South wins and continues with a second round of hearts. We can hold up our ace until the third round of the suit.

Now we go about setting up our ninth trick in spades by cashing the king and running the ‘10’. North wins but has no more hearts left.

Of course we’ve made sure to keep our ♦10 entry to our ♠AJ.

<p>♠ 1065 ♥ A853 ♦ 5 ♣ 109654</p> <p>♠ AJ832 ♠ K97 ♥ K6 ♥ Q7 ♦ KJ63 ♦ Q1042 ♣ 82 ♣ AQ73</p> <p>♠ Q4 ♥ J10942 ♦ A987 ♣ KJ</p>		<h3>Sligo Inter A Tuesday 1st February</h3> <h4>Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all</h4> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>1NT</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>2♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>2♠</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>2NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>3♠ or 4♠</td><td>All Pass</td></tr></table>		West	North	East	South			1NT	Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass	2NT	Pass	3♠ or 4♠	All Pass																												
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		<p>E/W have 25 points and an 8-card spade fit so they would like to land in 4♠. Yes N/S can defeat it if they can find their diamond ruff (but it's no obvious to find if South leads ♥J and declarer plays a small heart from dummy).</p> <p>However the question is - should East bid 3♠ or 4♠ or even should maybe West have insisted on game by rebidding 3NT instead of 2NT?</p> <p>It seems both players have reasons to upgrade their hands and still we can't fault those E/W players who don't upgrade and land in the actual top spot of 3♠.</p> <p>You pay your money and you take your chances.</p>																																													

♠ 106
 ♥ 10964
 ♦ 764
 ♣ Q1097
 ♠ KJ872 ♠ A53
 ♥ A52 ♥ K73
 ♦ Q8 ♦ AKJ1053
 ♣ J54 ♣ 6
 ♠ Q94
 ♥ QJ8
 ♦ 92
 ♣ AK832

HCP
2
11 15
12

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	1	-	-	-	-
S	1	-	-	-	-
E	-	6	2	6	2
W	-	6	2	6	2

Sligo - Mon 31st January 2022

Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Dbf	1NT
			All Pass

1NTx-7 will not be pretty for N/S but I doubt this result will be replicated at the table.

If playing weak NT then South has a perfect 1NT opening bid. If West overcalls 2♠ then East has an easy raise to 4♠. However it is not really advisable to overcall with a 5-3-3-2 shape at the two level so West does best to pass.

Now the spotlight turns on East. A simple 2♦ overcall does not do justice to the East hand and with 15+ points and such a good suit it must be tempting to make a penalty double of the 1NT bid.

West should be happy to leave South play in 1NT doubled especially when it turns out that the defenders win the first 13 tricks!

If N/S can somehow escape to 2♣ then the most likely best result for E/W will be to reach 4♠. If N/S take their club trick then declarer makes 12 tricks otherwise declarer makes all 13 tricks.

There is no way route to 6♦ or 6♠.

<p>♠ A9752 ♥ 9 ♦ Q75 ♣ AQ62</p> <p>♠ 106 ♠ KQJ ♥ K7543 ♥ Q108 ♦ 10642 ♦ KJ93 ♣ 87 ♣ 953</p> <p>♠ 843 ♥ AJ62 ♦ A8 ♣ KJ104</p>		<p>Sligo Thursday 27th January 2022</p> <p>Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all</p> <table><tr><th><i>West</i></th><th><i>North</i></th><th><i>East</i></th><th><i>South</i></th></tr><tr><td></td><td>1 ♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>2 ♣</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>3 ♣</td><td>Pass</td><td>4 ♠</td></tr><tr><td colspan="4">All Pass</td></tr></table> <p>N/S have 25 points and an 8-card spade fit so they want to land in 4 ♠. When North supports clubs she is implying a 5-card spade suit so South can bid the spade game.</p> <p>East does best to lead ♠K top of sequence despite it being the trump suit.</p> <p>Declarer does best to duck this trick, win the second trump and leave the master trump outstanding and then go about ruffing a few hearts in hand – a sort of dummy reversal.</p>		<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>		1 ♠	Pass	2 ♣	Pass	3 ♣	Pass	4 ♠	All Pass			
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Pass	3 ♣	Pass	4 ♠																
All Pass																			

HCP	
12	
3	12
13	

Makeable contracts						
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	
N	4	1	-	5	2	
S	4	1	-	4	1	
E	-	-	1	-	-	
W	-	-	1	-	-	

<p>♠ 874 ♥ 9652 ♦ Q1082 ♣ 106</p> <p>♠ QJ10 ♠ AK652 ♥ 873 ♥ A104 ♦ AJ94 ♦ 5 ♣ AJ3 ♣ KQ74</p> <p>♠ 93 ♥ KQJ ♦ K763 ♣ 9852</p>		<p>Sligo Thursday 27th January 2022</p> <p>Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>1♠</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>2♦</td><td>Pass</td><td>3♣</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>4♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>4NT</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>5♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>6♠</td><td>All Pass</td></tr></table>		West	North	East	South			1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass	3♣	Pass	4♠	Pass	4NT	Pass	5♠	Pass	6♠	All Pass																								
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HCP																																															
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<p>♠ - ♥ Q765 ♦ 8743 ♣ J9632</p> <p>♠ 98754 ♠ AK632 ♥ 432 ♥ AK ♦ 652 ♦ AKJ ♣ K5 ♣ A84</p> <p>♠ QJ10 ♥ J1098 ♦ Q109 ♣ Q107</p>		<p>Sligo Thursday 27th January 2022</p> <p>Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>2♣</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>2♦</td><td>Pass</td><td>2♠</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>4♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>6♠</td><td>All Pass</td></tr></table> <p>Ok the 6♠ bid is a bit of a flyer - but let's try and make 4♠+2 at least.</p> <p>South leads top of his sequence (♥J or ♠Q) and even though the diamond finesse is wrong declarer can make 12 tricks by end-playing South with his trump winner.</p> <p>Declarer wins the heart lead, cashes the ace and king of trumps, cashes her second heart winner, plays a club to the king, a club to the ace, ruffs a club, ruffs a heart in hand and then exit on a trump.</p> <p>Now South is end-played having to either give declarer a ruff and discard or lead a diamond into declarer's ♦AKJ.</p>		West	North	East	South	Pass	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠	Pass	6♠	All Pass																												
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<p>♠ J94 ♥ AQ753 ♦ 54 ♣ 1052</p> <p>♠ 3 ♠ AK875 ♥ K862 ♥ 9 ♦ KJ ♦ AQ10632 ♣ AQJ983 ♣ K</p> <p>♠ Q1062 ♥ J104 ♦ 987 ♣ 764</p>	<p>Sligo - Wednesday 26th January 2022</p> <p>Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th><i>West</i></th><th><i>North</i></th><th><i>East</i></th><th><i>South</i></th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>1♣</td><td>1♥</td><td>2♦</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>3♣</td><td>Pass</td><td>3♠</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>3NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>4♠</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>5♦</td><td>Pass</td><td>6♦</td><td>All Pass</td></tr></table> <p>Minor suit slams are never easy to bid and nowadays any that are bid are because we have gone past 3NT and know that bidding of 5 of a minor is rarely a good score so we may as well bid 6 of the minor.</p> <p>If you are not going to bid a minor suit slam then you should do your best to stop in 3NT or failing that to stop in 4NT or even 5NT.</p> <p>When we have good hands we should bid our longest suits first so East responds 2♦ rather than 1♠ on the above hand. Now when East bids spades twice he is showing 5 spades and by implication 6 cards in diamonds (if East had 5-5 he would bid spades first – the higher of two five card suits).</p>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>				Pass	1♣	1♥	2♦	Pass	3♣	Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT	Pass	4♠	Pass	5♦	Pass	6♦	All Pass
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<p>♠ 76 ♥ QJ10752 ♦ 93 ♣ A73</p> <p>♠ 984 ♠ J10532 ♥ 4 ♥ 98 ♦ AKJ1065 ♦ Q7 ♣ Q64 ♣ KJ95</p> <p>♠ AKQ ♥ AK63 ♦ 842 ♣ 1082</p>		<p>Sligo - Monday 24th January 2022</p> <p>Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all</p> <table><tr><th><i>West</i></th><th><i>North</i></th><th><i>East</i></th><th><i>South</i></th></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>2♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>4♥</td></tr><tr><td colspan="4">All Pass</td></tr></table> <p>N/S have 23 HCP and a 10-card heart fit so they would like to land in 4♥. There are 10 easy tricks in the play i.e. 6 heart tricks, 3 spade tricks and the ace of clubs.</p> <p>The trap to avoid as declarer, is to carelessly ruff low on the third round of diamonds thereby suffering an embarrassing over-ruff by East. The old advice here is to 'Never send a boy on a man's errand'.</p> <p>A few N/S pairs floundered in 2♥ or 3♥ and maybe the guidance here is that we should upgrade our hands whenever we have 4-card or better support for our partners. In addition we also need to upgrade our hands if we have more than our fair share of aces and kings.</p>		<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass																																			
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<p>♠ AKQ9 ♥ Q2 ♦ A102 ♣ K653</p> <p>♠ 72 ♠ 865 ♥ AK85 ♥ J9763 ♦ J8764 ♦ Q ♣ Q7 ♣ A1092</p> <p>♠ J1043 ♥ 104 ♦ K953 ♣ J84</p>		<p>Sligo - Monday 17th January 2022</p> <p>Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th><i>West</i></th><th><i>North</i></th><th><i>East</i></th><th><i>South</i></th></tr><tr><td></td><td>1♣</td><td>Pass</td><td>1♠</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>4♠</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td></tr></table> <p>East is not worth a vulnerable 1♥ overcall (the suit is awful and the hand is too weak – a vulnerable overcall should be 10+ as a minimum).</p> <p>Some Souths will pass with 5 HCP and for sure it will be the wiser decision tonight but in the long run the two 10's might be worth borrowing a point for?</p> <p>Responding 1♠ will get you to 4♠ which is a tad too high while on the other hand passing might mean that you miss the spade fit altogether.</p> <p>All in all, if you can't stop in a spade partscore, then getting to 4♠-1 undoubled will not be a complete disaster so maybe responding 1♠ is indeed the right thing to do – and especially if partner's 1♣ does not promise 4+ clubs.</p>		<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>		1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass																																	
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♠ 63	♠ K52
♥ Q8	♥ J1092
♦ 10952	♦ A876
♣ Q9652	♣ J10
♠ Q1084	♠ AJ97
♥ K7654	♥ A3
♦ Q4	♦ KJ3
♣ 74	♣ AK83

HCP	
4	9
7	20

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	4	2	-	-	2
S	4	2	-	-	2
E	-	-	2	-	-
W	-	-	2	-	-

Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	3NT	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

South liked his hand and decided to treat it as 21-22 balanced.

West led his fourth best heart and dummy's ♥Q won trick 1 and then led a diamond to his Jack and West's Queen.

West played a second heart and declarer won with the ace and led his ♦K. East won with Ace and returned the ♥J.

All West had to do was allow East's Jack to win the trick and then overtake East's ♥10 on the fourth round of hearts to be able to cash the fifth heart for the setting trick.

Sadly West overtook East's ♥J and now the suit was blocked so the defenders could only win 2 heart tricks instead of 3. 3NT made.

<p>♠ 9 ♥ KQ975 ♦ KQJ2 ♣ Q76</p> <p>♠ J654 ♠ A10872 ♥ A864 ♥ 10 ♦ A1094 ♦ 85 ♣ 5 ♣ A10983</p> <p>♠ KQ3 ♥ J32 ♦ 763 ♣ KJ42</p>		<h3>Sligo - Monday 10th January 2022</h3> <p>Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>1♥</td><td>1♠</td><td>1NT</td></tr><tr><td>2♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td></tr></table> <p>We don't often see hands where each of the four players has an interesting bidding decision to make - but this is one.</p> <p>North has an easy 1♥ opening bid but holding a minimum opening bid he is not quite worth a 3♦ rebid. Some East's will pass and others will overcall 1♠ or even 2♥ (showing S+C).</p> <p>Holding 10 points, South is borderline between 1NT and 2NT and a case could be made for either – the only negative feature of the South hand is the 4333 shape.</p> <p>West is definitely worth a spade raise and 2♥ (Unassuming Cue Bid) shows a good raise to 3♠ while a direct 3♠ raise shows a weak 4-card raise.</p> <p>Getting to play in spades be it 3♠ or 4♠ will be a good score for E/W however N/S might steal the board in 3♥ or 4♥ and if they can escape for 2 down undoubted they will score well.</p>		West	North	East	South		1♥	1♠	1NT	2♥	Pass	Pass	Pass																																
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<p>♠ 6 ♥ Q72 ♦ AQ973 ♣ QJ94</p> <p>♠ AJ73 ♠ Q1042 ♥ J94 ♥ 1083 ♦ K64 ♦ 82 ♣ K83 ♣ A1062</p> <p>♠ K985 ♥ AK65 ♦ J105 ♣ 75</p>		<p>Sligo - Monday 10th January 2022</p> <p>Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th><i>West</i></th><th><i>North</i></th><th><i>East</i></th><th><i>South</i></th></tr><tr><td>1NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>2♦ (S+another)</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>2NT (ask)</td><td>Pass</td><td>3♥</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>3NT</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td></tr></table>		<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	1NT	Pass	Pass	2♦ (S+another)	Pass	2NT (ask)	Pass	3♥	Pass	3NT	All Pass																					
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<p>♠ 98 ♥ A1092 ♦ KJ ♣ KJ643</p> <p>♠ Q42 ♠ AKJ ♥ QJ754 ♥ K863 ♦ 842 ♦ AQ973 ♣ 87 ♣ 2</p> <p>♠ 107653 ♥ - ♦ 1065 ♣ AQ1095</p>		<p>Sligo - Wednesday 5th January 2022</p> <p>Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th><i>West</i></th><th><i>North</i></th><th><i>East</i></th><th><i>South</i></th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>1 ♦</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>1 ♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>4 ♥</td><td>All Pass</td></tr></table> <p>4 ♥ by West was a popular contract. West is worth a 1 ♥ response with his 5 HCP and a 5-card suit. Although North has 12 HCP he has no good bid – double would show the unbid suits especially spades and bidding 2C with such a bad suit is not recommended.</p> <p>The good advice is that ‘when you’re fixed - stay fixed!’</p> <p>East with 17 HCP and a singleton is well worth a 4 ♥ rebid.</p> <p>Most defenders successfully managed to get their 4 tricks to defeat the contract i.e. 2 hearts, 1 diamond and 1 club. Sadly however some N/S pairs ‘blew’ their diamond trick.</p> <p>Both defenders have one job each to do – North has to make sure that he does not squander is HA on small cards – he needs to make sure that his HA captures an honour – and South needs to make sure that he does not discard one of his diamonds or that if he does keep his three diamonds that he does not play his D10 on either the first or second round of the suit.</p> <p>South’s D10 will win the third round of diamonds as long as South still holds that card.</p>		<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>			1 ♦	Pass	1 ♥	Pass	4 ♥	All Pass																																
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E	1	2	4	1	3																																										
W	1	2	4	1	3																																										

Of course the 1♠ overcall would not have caused any problems for an experienced E/W pair familiar with 'Negative' or 'Sputnik' doubles. A double by West says 'My double is a 'Take-Out' double showing 7+ points and 4 cards in each of the two unbid suits – but for sure I have 4 cards in hearts'.

Armed with the knowledge that his partner has 4 cards in hearts, the East hand jumps up in value from 17 to 19 (1 point for each doubleton) and he can rebid 4♥. Even if East is cautious (reasonable with 6 losers) and only rebids 3♥, the West hand with 8+1 points is worth a raise to game. But even E/W languish in 3♥+1 it is still better than 3♦-1.

Even if South decides to make a questionable vulnerable weak jump overcall, West or East can still deploy their new 'Negative Double' gadget and get to play in a heart contract or they might leave South stew in 2♠x.

Tip: Learn 'Negative' doubles. These are basically take-out doubles in response to partner's opening bid showing the other two suits but definitely guaranteeing 4 cards in any unbid major.

♠ J9763
 ♥ 6
 ♦ AK106
 ♣ K106
 ♠ A10 ♠ K5
 ♥ K985 ♥ AQJ10
 ♦ 54 ♦ 983
 ♣ QJ543 ♣ 9872
 ♠ Q842
 ♥ 7432
 ♦ QJ72
 ♣ A

HCP
11
10 10
9

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	4	-	4	-
S	-	4	-	4	-
E	2	-	2	-	-
W	2	-	2	-	-

Sligo - Tuesday 4th January 2022

Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	1♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Some tables 'passed out' this board and then quite a few bid and made 4♠. That North hand sure looks like it's worth a 1♠ opening bid.

The South hand is worth 2♠ if you count HCP, it's worth 3♠ if you count HCP plus 2 more for the singleton club and it's worth a 4♠ response if you count losers (7 losers). Put me down for 4♠.

You have 10 easy tricks: 3 spades, 4 diamonds, 2 clubs and a club ruff in dummy. You lose 3 tricks: 2 spades and one heart.

Tip: Become familiar with the useful idea of the 'Losing Trick Count' (LTC).

<p>♠ J9542 ♥ KQ10 ♦ Q5 ♣ AQ3</p> <p>♠ 6 ♠ Q87 ♥ J62 ♥ 854 ♦ KJ96 ♦ 10843 ♣ J9652 ♣ 1087</p> <p>♠ AK103 ♥ A973 ♦ A72 ♣ K4</p>		<p>Sligo - Monday 3rd Jan 2022</p> <p>Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all</p> <table><tr><th><i>West</i></th><th><i>North</i></th><th><i>East</i></th><th><i>South</i></th></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>1♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>4NT</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>5♣</td><td>Pass</td><td>5♦</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>5♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>6♠</td></tr><tr><td colspan="4">All Pass</td></tr></table> <p>With 32 points and a 5-4 spade fit, N/S need to be in a slam contract - either 6S or 6NT.</p> <p>4NT is RKCB (Roman Key Card Blackwood)</p> <p>5♣ shows 1 or 4 key cards</p> <p>5♦ asks about the ♠Q</p> <p>5♠ denies the ♠Q</p>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	Pass	1♠	Pass	4NT	Pass	5♣	Pass	5♦	Pass	5♠	Pass	6♠	All Pass			
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>																			
Pass	1♠	Pass	4NT																			
Pass	5♣	Pass	5♦																			
Pass	5♠	Pass	6♠																			
All Pass																						

HCP	
14	
6	2
18	

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	4	4	7	7	7
S	4	4	7	7	7
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

HCP	Makeable contracts					
		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
14	N	4	4	7	7	7
6	S	4	4	7	7	7
2	E	-	-	-	-	-
18	W	-	-	-	-	-

Looking at all 4 hands you can make all 13 tricks. Quite a few did not get to slam and quite a few just made 12 tricks. More worrying however is that quite a few only made 11 tricks.

On a really bad night it does look like you might potentially lose a diamond trick and a second trick to the queen of spades. However that should not happen. It is understandable that you might lose a trick to the spade queen by deciding to play for the drop i.e. by cashing your ace and king of spades but if you now go about your business of cashing your 4 heart winners you can dispose of your diamond loser from hand before East gets in.

The cunning declarers who made all 13 tricks knew that the correct play in spades was to play for the drop but they gave themselves an ‘edge’ by leading the jack of spades from hand – their intention was to rise with the ace and cash the king thereby losing a trick to East’s queen – but by leading the jack they tempted a few East’s to blindly cover an honour with an honour.

Tip: Never cover in the trump suit.

<p>♠ 9832 ♥ 1042 ♦ 1098 ♣ 1075</p> <p>♠ K754 ♠ AQ ♥ AKJ97 ♥ 863 ♦ 7 ♦ AQJ6 ♣ AQJ ♣ K986</p> <p>♠ J106 ♥ Q5 ♦ K5432 ♣ 432</p>		<p>Sligo – Monday 3rd January 2022</p> <p>Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all</p> <table><tr><th><i>West</i></th><th><i>North</i></th><th><i>East</i></th><th><i>South</i></th></tr><tr><td></td><td>Pass</td><td>1♣</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>1♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>1NT</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>2♦</td><td>Pass</td><td>3♥</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>4NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>5♥</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>6NT</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p>E/W have 34 points and an 8-card heart fit so they need to be in a slam - either 6H or 6NT and with 33+ it should be 6NT. If they had the ♥Q then 7♥ would be a good contract.</p> <p>Tip: With a 2-suited hand we do not jump shift So a 1♥ response is enough in response to the 1♣ opening.</p>		<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>		Pass	1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass	1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass	3♥	Pass	4NT	Pass	5♥	Pass	6NT	All Pass		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>																								
	Pass	1♣	Pass																								
1♥	Pass	1NT	Pass																								
2♦	Pass	3♥	Pass																								
4NT	Pass	5♥	Pass																								
6NT	All Pass																										

HCP
0
18 16
6

Makeable contracts					
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	7	5	7	6	7
W	7	5	7	6	7

When opener rebids 1NT (15-17), West can immediately rebid 6NT but does best to investigate a possible 4-4 spade fit or a possible 5-3 heart fit in case there is a grand slam in spades or hearts available. It is good policy – with balanced hands to either open 1NT or rebid No-Trump – which implies that if you do rebid 1♠ in these auctions that you have a 5-4 distribution rather than a more balanced 4-4 distribution.

Some pairs play a 2♣ rebid here as checkback and others, as here, play XZY where the 2D is game forcing and asking for more information. East's 3H shows 3 cards in hearts and a maximum hand.

4NT is RKCB (Roman Key Card Blackwood). The 5♥ response shows 2 key cards without the ♥Q.

West decides that bidding the grand slam missing the ♥Q is too risky so he settles for his original fall back plan of 6NT. All roads lead to 13 tricks.